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From the Publisher

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Purpose Statement

| This publication is by and largely for the academic communities of the twenty-six colleges and universities of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. It is published by the Congregational and Synodical Mission Unit of the ELCA. The publication has its home at Augustana College, Rock Island, Illinois, which has generously offered leadership and physical and financial support as an institutional sponsor for the publication.

The ELCA has frequently sponsored conferences for faculty and administrators that have addressed the church-college/university partnership. The ELCA has sponsored an annual Vocation of the Lutheran College Conference. The primary purpose of *Intersections* is to enhance and continue such dialogue. It will do so by:

- Lifting up the vocation of Lutheran colleges and universities
- Encouraging thoughtful dialogue about the partnership of colleges and universities with the church
- Offering a forum for concerns and interests of faculty at the intersection of faith, learning, and teaching
- Raising for debate issues about institutional missions, goals, objectives, and learning priorities
- Encouraging critical and productive discussion on our campuses of issues focal to the life of the church
- Serving as a bulletin board for communications among institutions and faculties
- Publishing papers presented at conferences sponsored by the ELCA and its institutions
- Raising the level of awareness among faculty about the Lutheran heritage and connectedness of their institutions, realizing a sense of being part of a larger family with common interests and concerns.

From the Publisher

| The sad announcement about the death of Tom Christenson arrived during the 2013 meeting of the ELCA college and university presidents. The ELCA higher education community is stronger for Tom's development of vocation as a defining motif of Lutheran higher education and his establishment of this journal. He will be missed, but he would have delighted in the trajectory toward a stronger network of shared identity set by our presidents at the 2013 meeting that received the word of his passing. And we know he delighted that *Intersections* has remained as a connecting tool among ELCA higher education leaders. An important voice has been lost, but the mission Tom loved and worked to strengthen continues. Please also see the remembrance of Tom by Bob Haak on page 31.

The presidents of ELCA colleges and universities meet each February in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Lutheran Educational Conference of North America. LECNA is officially an association of all Lutheran colleges and universities in the United States and Canada. In practice, it is now an association of ELCA colleges/universities and the schools of the Concordia University System of the Lutheran Church Missouri Synod, although an occasional Canadian college and a few other Lutheran-related schools in the United States participate. It is not unfair to say that the annual meetings have often been perfunctory and sometimes aimless affairs, albeit spiced with the convivial pleasures and networking opportunities born of time together with good colleagues. Conviviality and networking will certainly remain a part of future presidential gatherings, but the perfunctory part is—I hope—about to be history.

Decisions made at the February 2013 meetings of LECNA and our ELCA presidents should allow the annual meeting of our presidents to claim in the future a more substantive role in directing the shared identity and common mission of ELCA colleges and universities. First, the meetings authorized reviews of the funding and organizational practices of both LECNA and our ELCA network. The review of our ELCA network—in addition to feeding into the LECNA review—represents a consensus that ELCA colleges and universities should take the lead in organizing our network, with the churchwide organization serving as a partner instead of the network's leader. Second, our ELCA presidents' meeting appointed a working group to draft a presidential statement on what it means to be a college or university of the ELCA. When finalized, all presidents will be asked to consider signing the statement. Both the organizational practices and presidential statement working groups are to report their progress on August 14th to a meeting of the presidents during the churchwide assembly in Pittsburgh. Recommendations for the future of LECNA will come to the annual meeting in February 2014.

I could offer a long recitation of the possibilities inherent in these outcomes of the February 2013 meetings for strengthening the identity and common mission of ELCA schools, but space does not allow it. Let me simply note for the readers of this journal, who care deeply about the vocation of our colleges and universities, that the potential of a more vital common life lies ahead.

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